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The Netherlands

Poultry and Products

Outbreak of Avian Influenza in The Netherlands

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Report Highlights: Outbreak of possible avian influenza virus hits Dutch poultry sector.

Includes PSD changes: No

Includes Trade Matrix: No

Unscheduled Report

The Hague [NL1], NL

Outbreak of Avian Influenza

On Friday February 28, avian influenza was reportedly found on six poultry farms. The farms are located around Barneveld, 35 kilometers East of Utrecht and in the "Gelderse Valley", the region where the Dutch egg and poultry sector is concentrated. Preliminary tests indicate the presence of avian influenza but the final diagnosis will be issued following by laboratory tests which will take maximum of two weeks.

The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture stated that this avian influenza variety has no negative effect on human health. The origin of the outbreak will be investigated by tracing the deliveries of live poultry, hatching eggs and human contacts. Some suspect free range chicken farms to be the possible origin of the outbreak. Another origin which is being considered is Italy where avian influenza has been present several years.

Dutch Ministry of Agriculture Imposed Two Controlled Areas

On Saturday, the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture declared a controlled area with a diameter of 10 km around the suspected farms in the area of Barneveld. The same day, the Ministry imposed a moratorium on transport of live poultry, hatching eggs, debris and manure throughout The Netherlands. In controlled areas, the transport of consumption eggs is also prohibited, it is compulsory to hold poultry indoors, and it is not allowed to visit farms. On Sunday, the Ministry also imposed a controlled area around Laren, about 30 kilometer West of Barneveld. At the moment, a total of thirteen farms are suspected. Poultry at all suspect farms and all poultry farms within one kilometer of the suspect farms are being culled. Belgian and German authorities reportedly started testing live poultry and hatching eggs transported from The Netherlands.

Dutch Poultry Meat Exports Affected

Dutch exports of live poultry and hatching eggs have immediately been stopped. Dutch poultry meat exports are also affected because the transport of live poultry is prohibited and about thirty slaughterhouses will have to stop their operations. The Dutch Organization of Poultry Farmers (NOP) reportedly estimates the damage to farmers at about one million EURO per day and for the whole sector at more than two million EURO per day. So far, the farmers will only be compensated for the culled poultry. The NOP fears that the avian influenza virus could endure for a long time, as in Italy where the virus has been present for about four years. In 2002, Dutch exports of egg and egg products valued EURO 420 million. Dutch exports of poultry valued EURO 1.12 billion in 2002. Germany and the UK are the main importers of Dutch poultry meat. Dutch retailers reportedly expect to have sufficient supply for about a week after which they will have to switch to imports. In 2002, Dutch poultry meat imports were valued at EURO 670 million with Germany and Belgium as the main suppliers.